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Methods of Developing the Speaking Voice in the Elementary Schools

by

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METHODS OF DEVELOPING THE SPEAKING VOICE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

WILBERT L. PRONOVOST

CLASSROOM TEACHERS are placing increased emphasis on voice usage in effective speaking. They suggest to children, "Speak so that everyone can hear you," "Use a friendly voice," "Speak slowly and clearly," and "Use expression when you talk." However, teachers also ask, "How can I help a child in my class who speaks too softly? I tell her to talk louder, but she can't," or, "How can I help a child who speaks too fast?" These teachers are concerned because some of the children with voice difficulties do not respond to simple suggestions to speak "louder" or "slower."

Recent surveys indicate that teachers should be concerned. Speech testing of 1,260 elementary school children in four schools in eastern Massachusetts revealed that 16.5 per cent had mild voice difficulties and five per cent had severe voice disorders. While the children with severe voice disorders will need the assistance of a speech therapist, the children with mild voice difficulties can be helped in the regular classroom. In fact, both groups of children will benefit if the teacher provides systematic instruction for *all* children in the use of a good voice.

A good speaking voice contributes greatly to oral communication. It can be heard easily; it is pleasing to hear; it expresses meaning and mood. In order that a child's voice may be heard, and be pleasing and expressive, five vocal skills must be developed:

1. A pleasing voice quality
2. Adequate volume
3. Variety in duration of words
4. Appropriate phrasing and smoothness
5. Variety of pitch

Each of these skills require specific lessons which should be taught to the entire class. These lessons provide the basis for continued instruction and practice that can be adapted to the needs of individual children. Such instruction need not require additional classroom time. There are more than enough opportunities and materials in the curriculum. The materials and speaking activities of reading, language arts, social studies, science, and music can be used if the teacher will adapt them for instruction in voice usage. Adaptation can be done so as to enrich the learning of subject matter at the same time.

This article will present sample lesson plans for each of the vocal skills and discuss methods of teaching each vocal skill. The sample lessons are suggestive only. Different grade levels and subject matter have been used in the sample series in order to illustrate a variety of approaches. Teachers will be able to use their own materials and adapt the lessons to their own grade level.

Factors Influencing Voice Usage. The voices children use in the classroom have been influenced by many factors. One factor is that of imitation. The voice a child uses when he comes to school may be one he hears at home. It may be an imitation of his father's, his mother's or his brother's voice. It may be a good voice or a poor one, depending on the kind of voice imitated. In school, a child may imitate the voice of a teacher. Therefore, every teacher should use a voice that serves as an excellent model for children to imitate.

Other factors that may influence voice usage are personality and emotional health. A shy child may use a soft, inexpressive voice consistent with his insecurity and withdrawal behavior. An aggressive child may speak loudly and harshly. The tension of a disturbed child may be evident in his high-pitched voice. Even the day-to-day or hour-by-hour differences in emotional feeling of a well adjusted child may cause slight changes in voice usage.

Physical factors such as cleft palate, polyps on the vocal cords or infections of the respiratory system may cause voice difficulties. However, very few children have voice difficulties that are caused by these physical factors.

Classroom Atmosphere. It is impossible to determine all of the factors that produce good and poor voices in the classroom. It is important, however, that teachers create a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to the development of good voice usage. The classroom atmosphere should be one in which speaking is enjoyable and meaningful. The atmosphere should be one in which it is fun to share ideas because the teacher and the class members are interested in the ideas themselves. Before any attempt is made to teach voice usage, a teacher should create meaningful speaking situations where children are stimulated to contribute worthwhile ideas and feelings.

Even when a specific vocal skill is being taught, the speaking situation should require meaningful use of the specific vocal skill. For example, an excellent time to teach variety of pitch might occur when the children are studying a story such as *Jack and the Beanstalk.* In dramatizing this story, a suggestion to "use your voice to show how Jack climbed *up, up,* and *up,*" or "the giant tumbled *down, down, down,*" can make variety of pitch a purposeful form of vocal expression.

By selecting meaningful materials and situations, the teacher makes possible a successful experience in good voice usage for most of the children in her class. Successful experience in group situations encourages children to improve their voices when speaking alone. In fact, some form of group participation, such as unison speaking or reading, should be used in teaching every vocal skill. Group participation gives children more opportunities to use a specific vocal skill. Group participation may be the only situation in which some children will attempt to use their voices differently. In the security of group speaking, children are more inclined to experiment with a new vocal skill.

Adjusting to a New Voice. Some children feel uncomfortable using a different voice from the one to which they are accustomed. A child with a soft voice may wish to speak more loudly; he may even be able to say a word or

two at an acceptable volume. However, talking louder requires more physical energy. This energy may bring about changes in muscular tension which feel unnatural in comparison to the child's habitual manner of talking. Such a child needs opportunities to adjust to his new voice so that he feels more at ease using it. Besides group participation, exaggeration of the extremes of each vocal skill is needed. In the introductory lessons on volume, for instance, children need to use very soft, moderate, and extremely loud voices so that they have a basis for comparison of their own volume with a volume that can be heard easily but is not too loud. The child with soft volume may complain that a moderate volume is too loud until he has experienced the use of an extremely loud volume. It may take some time to convince such a child that the volume he thinks is too loud is in reality only a moderate volume. The child's reactions are based on his responses to muscular changes and not to the sound of his own voice. It is sometimes necessary to make tape recordings of children's voices so that they can hear themselves as others hear them.

For accurate reproduction of the volume of a child's voice, however, the volume control of the recorder must be readjusted during the playback until it sounds only as loud as the original voice. This readjustment is necessary because the setting of a volume control for good tape recording is different from setting of the volume control for accurate reproduction of the original voice volume. Also, extreme care should be taken if a reasonably accurate reproduction of the child's tone quality is desired. Since room acoustics affect the recorded voice quality, children should record their voices individually about six inches from the microphone, preferably in a quiet, non-reverberating room. The fastest speed of the tape recorder should be used for the best results.

One Skill at a Time. Only one vocal skill should be taught at a time. This will avoid confusion and allow children to concentrate on achieving some proficiency with one skill before learning another. The sequence in which the skills are discussed in this article is a recommended sequence for teaching. However, if available teaching materials make a different sequence more meaningful, the revised sequence can be used. Some of the teaching materials are appropriate for teaching more than one vocal skill. In the primary grades, for instance, the story of *The Three Bears* may be used for volume, pitch level, or voice quality, depending upon the interpretation of the bears' voices. Nevertheless, only one skill should be emphasized in a lesson.

An introductory lesson for each of the vocal skills should be taught successively. As soon as the majority of children in a classroom can use a vocal skill adequately in group participation or with carefully selected follow-up material, the next skill should be introduced. Not more than two weeks should be required for each vocal skill. The remainder of the school year can be used to provide continued practice according to each child's individual needs.

Adapting to Individual Needs. Throughout the school year, children can be encouraged to use those speaking activities and materials most suited to their individual vocal needs. If, for example, a story to be dramatized has one character who speaks loudly, one who speaks slowly, and a third who

speaks excitedly, the dialogue of these characters should be dramatized by the child who needs to talk louder, the child who needs to speak more slowly, and the child whose voice needs more variety of pitch.

Follow-up activities such as the type described above will be necessary throughout the school year. Many children with voice difficulties may need the entire school year, and more, to bring about permanent improvement in voice usage.

How to Use the Lesson Plans

The suggested lesson plans which follow are presented as illustrations of the methods and materials to be used. The dialogue between the teacher and children is simulated. The lessons were selected to illustrate the use of a variety of subject matter and speaking activities at representative grade levels. Each teacher should examine her own curriculum for appropriate materials and activities through which she can teach the vocal skills.

If a teacher wishes to use the lesson plans included here, she should not expect children to answer in the same manner as in the suggested lesson plan. These lesson plans include only the desired children's answers. Since children's answers will vary from class to class, teachers may have to use longer question periods to develop children's understandings of the concepts being taught.

SKILL ONE: DEVELOPING A PLEASING VOICE QUALITY

Voice quality may be influenced by volume, duration of words, pitch and vocal ease. Instruction in using adequate volume may improve the quality of one child's voice, while instruction in duration of words may improve the quality of another child's voice. There is one skill, however, that is basic for all children if they are to have a pleasing voice. This skill is *vocal ease*. Vocal ease exists when there is freedom from excessive tension in the speech muscles, especially the muscles of the throat. Speaking activities for vocal ease are designed to reduce tension. Tension may result from emotional factors, from self-consciousness about speaking, or from misuse of the vocal mechanism.

Teachers should not expect lessons in vocal ease to improve the voices of children with emotional problems. Wise teachers will secure the assistance of a guidance counselor or psychologist for these children. However, children with emotional problems could be encouraged to participate in the group speaking activities of all vocal skill lessons. These group speaking activities will also help to develop self confidence about speaking.

The majority of the children in a classroom will be well adjusted children who misuse their vocal mechanism by increasing throat tension unnecessarily when they speak more loudly or more expressively. All children will profit from instruction in vocal ease so that they can maintain a pleasing voice quality in the many different kinds of situations in which they must speak.

The following suggested lesson for a third grade class illustrates the type of materials and speaking activities which can be used at any grade level.

A Lesson in
Developing a Pleasing Voice Quality Through Vocal Ease
Grade 3

Objectives

General: To provide enrichment of children's reading experiences through dramatization. (Includes activities related to physical education).

Speaking and Listening:

Teacher's:
1. To develop ability to listen for mood and characterization as revealed by voice quality.
2. To develop ability to speak with a pleasing voice by relaxing the vocal mechanism.

Children's:
1. To listen to the tone quality of voices.
2. To feel differences in throat tension for different voice qualities.
3. To use a pleasing voice by relaxing the throat muscles.

Materials

W. S. Gray, A. S. Artley, and M. H. Arburthnot. "Sojo," *The New Streets and Roads*, Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1952, pp. 140–147.

Willard Alden. "Morning Ritual," an original poem.

Mary Green. "The Sleepy Groundhog," an original poem.

Procedure

(One of the reading groups has read the story of "Sojo." This enrichment lesson can be conducted with the whole class.

(Synopsis of story: Sojo was a lazy little boy who was always very, very sleepy. One morning his mother woke him up early. She told Sojo she wanted him to water the cabbages. After breakfast Sojo went to the cabbage patch, but when he was almost there he lay down under a tree and was soon fast asleep. Later he heard a splashing noise, and saw an elephant washing himself in a nearby pond. He tricked the elephant into watering the cabbages so he could go back to sleep. When the elephant thanked Sojo for letting him do the work, Sojo sleepily said he was welcome, yawned and went back to sleep. When his mother woke him up for lunch, she was surprised to find the cabbages watered).

Teacher: Some of you have read the story of Sojo. Tell me, what kind of a boy was he.

Child: He was lazy and always sleepy.

Teacher: How did his voice sound when he talked?

Child: He yawned.

Teacher: Let's all say, "You're welcome," and yawn as we say it. Let's try to sound sleepy.

Children: You're welcome.

Teacher: How do you think Sojo's mother would sound when she tried to wake him up so he would do his work?

Child: Cross or angry.

Teacher: Let's all say, "Wake up," in a cross voice, the way Sojo's mother might say it.

Children: Wake up!

Teacher: I am going to read a poem about another sleepy boy and his mother. Listen so you can tell me about the poem. Listen to the sound of the boy's voice and his mother's voice.

(Teacher should read "Morning Ritual," using appropriate voice qualities for Jacky and his mother. Jacky's voice should sound sleepy at first, become clear in quality on "O. K., I'm out of bed," and get sleepier again as the poem is finished. The mother's voice should be clear and pleasing at the beginning, become more harsh and shrill until it is extremely so for, "Almost quarter to eight!" and become more pleasing at the end of the poem).

Morning Ritual

by

*Willard Alden**

Jacky, awake and come on.
Yawn.
Jacky, come on and let's go!
I know.
Jacky, my patience you'll break.
I'm awake.
Jacky, the bacon is brown.
Covers are down.
Jacky, someone's at the door.
My foot's on the floor.
Jacky, it's Alvin and Fred.
O. K., I'm out of bed.
Johnny is coming to play.
What's the time of day?
Almost a quarter to eight!
Tell them to wait.
Jacky, the boys have a snake!
I'm awake.
Jacky, the boys have to go.
I know.
Jacky, the boys have all gone.
Yawn.

*By permission of the author.

Teacher: Who can tell me what this poem is about?
(Discuss the story in the poem, the characters, how each character felt, etc., to be sure that the children understand the poem).

Teacher: What kind of a voice did Jacky use at the beginning and end of the poem?

Child: Sleepy, yawning voice.

Teacher: What kind of voice did his mother use when she said, "My patience you'll break."?

Child: Angry, shrill, harsh, loud.

Teacher: Let's hear you call, "Jacky," in the mother's shrill voice.

Children: Jacky.

Teacher: Let's hear you say, "I know," in Jacky's yawning voice.

Children: I know.

Teacher: Now let's call, "Jacky," again in mother's shrill voice.

Children: Jacky.

Teacher: How did your throat feel when you said that?

Child: It hurt.

Teacher: Yes, when we use a shrill voice our throat muscles get tight and our throat hurts. Let's all say "Jacky" again and feel how tight the muscles are in our throats.

Children: Jacky.

Teacher: Now let's say, "I know," in Jacky's yawning voice. Before we do let's all yawn and stretch. (Allow time for this). Now let's say, "I know."

Children: I know (while yawning).

Teacher: How did your throat feel when you said, "I know?"

Child: It felt easy.

Teacher: Yes, our throats were not tight the way they were when we talked like Jacky's mother. Let's say, "I know," again, and feel how easy our throats feel.

Children: I know.

Teacher: When we talk most of the time do you think we should talk the way Jacky or his mother talked?

Child: No, we should talk with an "in between" voice.

Teacher: Should your "in between" voice sound more like Jacky's voice or more like his mother's?

Child: More like Jacky's.

Teacher: That's right. When we talk, we should try to use a pleasing voice in which our throats are not tight and our voices shrill. We should make our voices yawn just a little so it will be easy to talk and our voices will be pleasing to hear. Let's take turns being Jacky and learn to use a sleepy and a pleasing voice. Make his voice sleepy at the beginning and the end of the poem and pleasing in the middle where he is awake.

Here is a copy of the poem. (Hand out mimeographed or dittoed copies). One half of the class can be Jacky and the other half his mother. Then we will do the poem again and everyone change parts.

(Allow the class to read poem in this group manner. Listen to be sure each group uses the appropriate voice qualities during the reading.

Evaluation:

Teacher: Let's list what we learned about our voices today.

1. We learned to listen to the different tones of people's voices.
2. We learned to feel the tightness in our throat for harsh, shrill voices.
3. We learned to make our voices pleasing by yawning and making them sound slightly sleepy.

Follow-up:

Teacher: I have another poem about someone else who is sleepy. Tomorrow I'll give you a copy of the poem and we can read it aloud together and use our most pleasing voices.

(The next day, or at any later day, hand out copies of "The Sleepy Groundhog." Discuss the meaning of the poem and then do choral reading, using a pleasing and yawning voice as suggested by the meaning of the poem).

The Sleepy Groundhog

by

*Mary Green**

The groundhog woke and rubbed his eyes
And stretched himself and said,
"Ho-hum, I've slept for quite awhile
Guess I'll get out of bed."

He stretched and yawned and stretched again,
And then yawned three times more.
He fumbled round his darkened room,
Then shuffled toward the door.

* By permission of the author.

"I guess I'll take a look around,"
The sleepy groundhog said,
"And if I spy my shadow out
I'll crawl right back to bed."

And sure enough, when he went out,
He saw his shadow there,
Ready to romp and race around
In the cold and frosty air.

"I'm really much too tired, shadow,
To stay outside and play.
Spring will be quite late this year.
I'll come out another day."

"And so, goodnight," the groundhog yawned.
He pulled the blanket o'er his head.
"I'll plan to see my shadow friend
Six weeks from now instead."

Lessons similar to the preceding sample introduce the skill of vocal ease by dramatizing differences in voice quality.

The mood of the stories and poems make speaking in "harsh" and "yawning" voices meaningful. By exaggerating the types of voices produced by extreme tension and exaggerated relaxation, the children become more aware of the importance of vocal ease. Having felt the effects of throat tension and exaggerated relaxation, children will more readily adjust to an "in-between" voice so that it feels "easy" to talk.

The first part of the lesson creates an interest in using voice quality meaningfully. The teacher provides a model for voice usage by demonstrating the extremes of voice quality required for good oral interpretation of the poem. The children practice using these exaggerated extremes in group speaking of the poem and then have an opportunity to develop their own interpretation of another poem which requires vocal ease.

Similar materials may be found at all grade levels. Many stories in readers and social studies books have moods or characterizations which require different voice qualities. One story in a fourth grade reader includes people who talk in a "quivering voice," a "tired voice," and "a firm clear voice."[1] Dramatization of these voices requires use of extreme tension, exaggerated relaxation, and normal vocal ease.

Primary grade children can practice vocal ease by contrasting the voices of the three billy goats and the troll. Children in one sixth grade science class developed awareness of vocal ease during their study of birds by con-

[1] W. S. Gray, A. S. Artley, and M. H. Arthuthnot. *Times and Places*, Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1942.

trasting the throat tension required to imitate the "caw, caw" of a crow with the relaxation required for the "coo, coo" of a dove.

Numerous poems are excellent for vocal ease.[1]

When the majority of children in a class have demonstrated ability to use vocal ease with materials and activities similar to those described, the next vocal skill should be taught. As each new vocal skill is taught, teachers should observe the effect of that skill on the voice quality of individual children. Thus each child will learn the combination of vocal skills that will help him develop his most pleasing voice quality.

SKILL TWO: DEVELOPING ADEQUATE VOLUME

A child is using adequate volume when he can be heard easily. The amount of volume which is adequate will vary with the speaking situation. Conversation between a child and teacher requires only soft volume. Oral reading in small groups requires more volume than conversation, but less volume than reading aloud or giving a talk to the entire class. Most children have difficulty being heard easily in the latter situation. Therefore instruction in using adequate volume should include practice in using soft, moderate, and loud volume levels according to the needs of the situation.

The following lesson for the primary grades illustrates one approach to adequate volume.

A Lesson in
Developing Adequate Volume

Primary Grades

Objectives

General: To promote language development through story telling.

Speaking and Listening:

Teacher's:

1. To develop an interest in listening to stories.
2. To develop ability to listen to differences in the volume of speaking voices.
3. To develop ability to use differences in volume when speaking.
4. To develop ability to speak loudly enough to be heard easily.
5. To enjoy speaking by dramatizing stories and familiar incidents.

---

[1] *E. g.*, Walter De La Mare. "Poor Tired Tim," *Collected Poems.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1948.

James Tippett, "Sunning," *A World to Know.* New York: Harpers, 1933.

This poem may also be found in Mildred Dawson and Jonnie M. Miller's *Language for Daily Use, Grade 3.* Yonkers: World Book Company, 1948.

Children's: 1. To enjoy listening to stories.
2. To listen for loud and soft voices.
3. To make our voices loud and soft when necessary.
4. To speak loudly enough to be heard easily.

Materials

Margaret Wise Brown, *SHHhhhh . . . BANG, A Whispering Book*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943.

Children's experiences with loud and soft voices.

Procedure

(First day):

(During story telling time the teacher reads the story of *SHHhhhh . . . BANG* to the children. She shows the children the pictures as she reads each page of the story).

(Synopsis of story: Once there was a town in which everybody whispered when they talked. Even the noises of trains, whistles, and horns were whispered. One day a noisy little boy came to town. When he tried to get something to eat in a restaurant, everyone told him to "sh!" The boy thought this was silly and decided he wouldn't whisper. So he slammed a door, shot off his gun, and shouted. He woke up the whole town, and the people began to talk again. All of the noises were as loud as they should be. The little boy got what he wanted to eat).

(The teacher reads the story in a voice which children can hear easily. She whispers when she reads about people whispering — the type is small for this portion of the dialogue — and she shouts when she reads about the noise the boy makes. The type is extra large for these portions of the story. After reading the story the teacher questions the children about it).

Teacher: How did the people talk at the beginning of the story?
Child: They whispered.

Teacher: Tell me some of the sounds that were whispered.
(Children whisper the sounds made by the train, the conductor, the whistles, etc.)

Teacher: What did the little boy ask when he came to town?
Child: He asked for something to eat.

Teacher: Did the little boy ask the question loudly?
Child: No, in a medium voice.

Teacher: What did the people say when the boy asked for something to eat?
Child: Sh.

Teacher: What did the boy say, then?
(Have the children make all the loud noises the boy made).

Teacher: What happened to the town?

Child: The town woke up and the people began to talk.

Teacher: When the people began to talk again, do you think they shouted the way the little boy did?

Child: No.

Teacher: Why not?

Child: Because it's too loud.

Teacher: How loudly do you think they talked?

Child: So people could hear them easily.

Teacher: Do we ever talk like the people and the boy in the story?

Child: Sometimes I have to whisper when my baby brother is asleep.

Child: I talk loudly when I'm playing cowboys.

Teacher: Let's all whisper "sh" the way mother does when baby brother is asleep.

Children: Sh.

Teacher: Let's all whisper, "Baby's asleep."

Children: Baby's asleep.

Teacher: Let's all shout, "Yipee!"

Children: Yipee!

Teacher: Let's all shout "Bang" the way you do when you play cowboys.

Children: Bang.

Teacher: Now let's say what the little boy said when he came to town. Let's say it so everyone can hear, but don't shout.

Children: What town is this?

Teacher: When we go home today, let's listen to some of the sounds and voices we hear in our neighborhood and home. Tomorrow, each of us will tell about one soft sound and one loud sound he heard.

(Second day):

Teacher: Let's see how well you listened to sounds and voices after we went home yesterday. I heard the oil burner motor humming softly "mmmmmm" but the vacuum cleaner went "zhzhzh" so loudly I couldn't hear anything else. What did you hear?

(Let all children tell what soft and loud sounds they heard. Encourage them to use very soft and very loud voices when they imitate the sounds. Encourage them to talk loudly enough to be heard easily when they are telling about what they heard.)

(Third day):

Teacher: Today, let's make believe we're in the town where everybody whispered. As I show you the pictures in the book, let's choose children to say and do the things in the story. Then we can play the story.

Follow up:

(During story telling and sharing time, encourage children to talk so that everyone can hear them easily.)

Teachers in the upper grades have used dramatization of social studies incidents for teaching volume. Extremely popular with children are dramatization of scenes from the Westward Movement in our country. Scenes from wagon trains, Indian attacks, and the pony express provide opportunities for all volume levels from very soft to very loud.

Follow-up practice at all grade levels should emphasize volume loud enough to be heard easily when speaking to the entire class. Practice material should require moderately loud volume in a pleasing voice quality. Many poems and stories can be used for choral speaking and oral reading.[1]

SKILL THREE: DEVELOPING VARIETY OF DURATION OF WORDS

One of the vocal skills that contributes to the expression of meaning and mood is that of *duration of words*. Words may be spoken with a short, medium or prolonged duration. When the phrase "quick as a flash" is spoken, the duration of the word "quick" will be short; when the phrase "plodding slowly along" is spoken, the duration of the word "slowly" will be prolonged. Many words, of course, are spoken with medium duration. In fact, most of the words in our language are not as obviously short or prolonged in duration as "quick" and "slowly." Usually, the exact meaning of a phrase determines the duration of individual words. If a child says, "It's a *beautiful* day," emphasizing "beautiful," the duration of the word "beautiful" will be prolonged. The word "day" will have a short duration. However, if another child responds with, "It *is* a beautiful day," the prolonged word will be "is." Both "beautiful" and "day" will be of medium duration. The duration of "it" and "a" will be short.

The following lesson illustrates how a study of imagery in poetry may be used to introduce the vocal skill of variety of duration of words. The speaking activities in the lesson should also enrich the study of poetry.

---

[1] *E.g.*, Vachel Lindsay. "The Sante Fe Trail" (may be found in many anthologies of American poetry).

Benjamin Elkin. *The Loudest Noise in the World*, New York: Viking Press, 1954.

Inez Hogan, "Barnyard Noises," "Look Out!" *Me*, New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1954.

Odille Ousley and David Russell. "The Little Women Wanted Noise," *Around the Corner*, Boston: Ginn and Company, 1948.

A Lesson in
Developing Variety in Duration of Words
Grade 5

Objectives

General: To develop vocabulary and imagery through enjoyment of poetry.

Speaking and Listening:

Teacher's:
1. To develop appreciative listening to poetry.
2. To develop ability to listen for descriptive words that suggest sounds and noises.
3. To develop ability to associate word meanings with the duration of the spoken word.
4. To develop ability to vary duration of words when speaking.
5. To develop ability to speak in a suitable rate.
6. To develop enjoyment of poetry through choral reading.

Children's:
1. To enjoy listening to poetry.
2. To listen for words that suggest sounds and noises we hear.
3. To recognize how words can vary in duration to suggest meaning.
4. To speak and read aloud with variety in duration of words.
5. To enjoy reading poetry aloud in groups.

Materials

Edna L. Sterling, Hannah Lindahl, and Katharine Koch, *English is Our Language*, 5. Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1950, Chapter 4, "Enjoying Poetry," pp. 121–142.[1]

Procedure

Read the poem to the children as suggested in the text. Read the first verse at a rapid rate to suggest swiftness; read the second verse at a slow rate with prolonged duration of words to suggest slowness.

Swift Things Are Beautiful[2]

Swift things are beautiful:
Swallows and deer,
And lightning that falls
Bright-veined and clear,
Rivers and meteors,
Wind in the wheat,
The strong-withered horse,
The runner's sure feet.

---

[1] Material from *English is Our Language*, 5, is reproduced by permission of Edna Sterling, Hannah Lindahl, Katharine Koch and D. C. Heath and Company.

[2] Reprinted from Elizabeth Coatsworth, *Away Goes Sally*, New York: Macmillan Company, 1934, by permission of the publishers.

And slow things are beautiful:
The closing of day,
The pause of the wave
That curves downward to spray,
The ember that crumbles,
The opening flower,
And the ox that moves on
In the quiet of power.

Elizabeth Coatsworth

Teacher: Let's turn to page 124 in our books and do the things suggested.
(Class discussion follows).

Teacher: What descriptions of swift things in the poem helped you to hear sounds they make?

Child: The lightning made me hear a sharp *crack*.

Child: The wind in the wheat makes a sound like *wheet*.

Child: I could hear the runner's feet going *clop-clop-clop*.

Teacher: What descriptions of slow things in the poem helped you to hear sounds they make?

Child: I could hear the long *swish* of the waves that spray.

Teacher: Let's turn to page 133, to the section on "Hearing, Seeing and Feeling." Can any of you make the sounds suggested by the descriptions?

Child: The whispering wind goes *wh* . . . (prolonged).

Child: The old windmill goes *creak* (prolonged).

Child: The sail goes *flap, flap, flap* (short duration).

Child: The tires go *mmmmmmmmmmm* . . . (prolonged).

Child: I say *ouch* (short duration) when I step on sharp stones.

Child: I say *brrrrr* . . . (prolonged) when I step into cold water.

Teacher: Did you notice the way you used your voices when you made these sounds and the ones suggested in the poem about swift and slow things?

Child: We made our voices go fast and slow.

Teacher: Yes, when we talk we say some words quickly and some slowly to help suggest what we are describing. Let's all say the sounds we have been talking about. Let's make them either short or long to express their meaning.
(Group practice by entire class).

Teacher: Let's look at the poems on page 132. What fast or slow words can you find in the poems? These poems were written by children.

Fog

I creep over the harbor,
And make foghorns sound;
I come on silent wings
causing ships to run aground;
And all that men can find
Is the wrecked ship's log.
I am the dark, murky,
Dangerous fog.

Sounds

I like to hear
The rain pattering on the roofs,
Water rushing down the brooks,
Waves slapping the shore,
Wind blowing through the beach grass.

Spring Fever

I have spring fever as anyone can see,
It really has its grip on me!

Whenever I can, I slump in a chair,
My feet are just the laziest pair!

Child: The word "creep" in *Fog* would be spoken slowly.
Child: The whole poem would be spoken slowly.
Child: In the poem *Sounds* the words "pattering," "rushing," "slapping" would be spoken quickly.
Child: In the Poem *Spring Fever* the words "slump" and "laziest" would be spoken slowly.

Teacher: Listen to this poem. Tell me how I used my voice to help you see the pictures described.

The Visitor*

Feather-footed and swift as a mouse
An elfin gentleman came to our house;
Knocked his wee brown knuckles upon our door;
Bowed till his peaked cap swept the floor.
His shiny eyes blinked bright at me
As he asked for bread and a cup of tea,

* From *Taxis and Toadstools*, by Rachel Field. Copyright 1926 by Doubleday and Company, Inc., by permission of the publisher.

"And plenty of honey, please," he said,
"For I'm fond of honey on my bread!"
Cross-legged he sat, with never a word,
But the old black kettle sang like a bird;
The red geranium burst in bloom
With the blaze of firelight in the room.
The china rattled on every shelf,
And the broom danced merrily all by itself.
Quick to the pantry then I ran
For to serve that elfin gentleman.
I brewed him tea, I brought him bread
With clover honey thickly spread.
One sip he took, one elfin bite,
But his ears they twitched with sheer delight.
He smacked his lips and he smiled at me.
"May good luck follow you, child!" said he.
He circled me round like a gay green flame
Before he was off the way he came,
Leaving me there in the kitchen dim,
Sighing and staring after him,
With the fire low and the tea grown cold,
And the moon through the window sharp and old,
Only before me — instead of honey,
That bread was golden with thick-spread money!

Rachel Field

(Ask questions suggested on page 126. Then ask the following questions).

Teacher: What words did I say quickly to help you see what was happening?

Children: Feather-footed burst swift rattled
knocked danced blinked twitched

Teacher: What words did I say slowly that helped you see what was happening?

Children: bowed shiny eyes sang like a bird
please sip sheer delight
sighing staring

Teacher: Did I make all the words short or long as I read the poem?

Child: No, most of the words were medium.

Teacher: Yes, some words are short, some long, many are medium in duration. Listen to these phrases and tell me how I say each word in the phrase.

(Key) sh (short), l (long), m (medium)

l m sh m
"sang like a bird"

sh l m
"his shiny eyes"

sh m m l
"he circled me round"

sh m sh l
"the bread was golden"

Teacher: What words were long in those phrases?

Children: Sang, shiny, round, golden.

Teacher: Would those words be spoken slowly every time we use them?

Child: No.

Teacher: What would make us say them differently?

Child: The meaning might be different in another poem, or when we are talking.

Teacher: That's right. The same is true of the short words. They might be medium or long at another time.

Teacher: Let's turn to page 129 and read the poem about "The Sandhill Crane." Suppose you read it silently first. (Allow time for reading). This poem has swift and slow moving things in it. Can you tell me what moves swiftly and slowly?

Children: The crane stalks slowly; the frogs, minnows, chipmunks, gophers and mice move quickly.

Teacher: Let's read this poem aloud together. We'll all be the crane and use our voices to show how slowly he stalks. Let's divide the class into five groups. One group will be the frogs, each of the other groups will be the minnows, chipmunks, gophers, or mice. Show by your voices how quickly the field folk move to get away from the crane.

The Sandhill Crane*

All — Whenever the days are cool and clear
The sandhill crane goes walking
Across the field by the flashing weir
Slowly, solemnly stalking.

Group 1 — The little frogs in the tules hear
And jump for their lives when he comes near,

Group 2 — The minnows scuttle away in fear,

All — When the sandhill crane goes walking.

All — The field folk know if he comes that way,
Slowly, solemnly stalking,
There is danger and death in the least delay
When the sandhill crane goes walking.

*Reprinted from Mary Austin, *Children Sing in the Far West*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, by permission of the publishers.

Group 3 The chipmunks stop in the midst of their play,
Group 4 The gophers hide in their holes away
Group 5 And hush, oh, hush! the field mice say,
All When the sandhill crane goes walking.

Mary Austin

Teacher: (Take time for class and group to practice each part. Have groups listen to each other to determine that duration of words is appropriate to the meaning. Then have the entire class do poem as a choral arrangement. If a tape recorder is available record the poem and let the class listen to the recording.)

Evaluation:

General: Review all materials on reading, writing, speaking and listening as indicated in the text.

Speaking and Listening:

Teacher: Let's list some of the things we learned about listening to poetry and reading it aloud.

1. We listened so we could see pictures described in the poems.
2. We listened to the short, medium and long words which helped us to see the pictures described in the poems.
3. We listened for sounds suggested by the words in the poems.
4. We used our voices to suggest meaning by making words short, medium, or long.

Follow up:

Emphasize variety of duration of words in listening, oral reading and choral reading of other poems suggested by the text.

Poetry anthologies contain many poems similar to those in the illustrative lesson which may be used to teach variety of duration of words. Music books are another excellent source of teaching materials since not only the lyrics but frequently the tempo of the song suggest variety in duration of words.[1] Stories also contain appropriate dialogue and narrative selections.[2] Physical education games sometimes require "fast" or "slow" actions which can be associated with short and prolonged duration of words.[3]

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[1] J. W. Beattie, *et. al.*, "Skipper," *The American Singer, Combined Grades*, New York: American Book Company, 1947, p. 20.

[2] Betty R. Wright. *Train Coming*, Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman Publishing Company, 1954.

[3] N. P. Nielson and W. Van Hagen. "The Toad's Mistake," *Physical Education for the Elementary Schools*, New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1954, p. 187.

SKILL FOUR: DEVELOPING PHRASING AND SMOOTHNESS

In speaking, ideas are communicated by phrases, or thought units. The phrases are separated by pauses, but the words within the phrases are connected smoothly. In oral reading, phrasal pauses usually coincide with the punctuation marks of the written form. Sometimes, complex sentences without punctuation require pauses to separate the phrases. When speaking a phrase such as "long, long ago," however, no pause is used, even though a comma is required for writing. In order to communicate unity of thought, children should learn to connect the words within phrases smoothly, pausing only to separate the thought units.

A Lesson in
Developing Phrasing and Smoothness

Grade 6*

Objectives

Science:

To study electricity and its uses, especially the use of electricity to send messages.

Language Arts:

Review of punctuation.

Speaking and Listening:

Teacher's:
1. To develop awareness of the phrase as the unit of thought in speaking and listening.
2. To develop ability to listen for thought units by identifying phrasal pauses.
3. To develop ability to listen for thought units expressed by an uninterrupted flow of words in each phrase.
4. To develop ability to use phrasal pauses properly in speaking.
5. To develop ability to speak smoothly the words within a phrasal unit.

Children's:
1. To listen for complete thoughts instead of individual words.
2. To listen for phrasal pauses as an aid to identifying complete thoughts.
3. To speak clearly by pausing between each thought unit.
4. To speak smoothly by connecting words in each phrase.

* Based on a lesson used by Mrs. Ellen Duffy in Wenham, Mass., and reproduced by permission.

Materials

W. Knox, G. Stone, M. Meister and D. Wheatley. *The Wonderworld of Science*, Book Six, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944, pp. 94–100.

"How Cyrus Laid the Cable" from *The Poetical Works of John Godfrey Saxe*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1889.

Procedure

This lesson should be taught after the class has studied the material on "Using Electricity to Send Messages in Science."

Teacher: We have been studying how electricity is used to send messages. What was the first way in which messages were sent by electricity?

Child: The telegraph with the Morse Code.

Teacher: How does the electricity carry the message by Morse Code?

Child: The telegraph key turns the electricity on and off to make clicks.

Teacher: How are the clicks used?

Child: Different numbers of long and short clicks mean different letters.

Teacher: What words do Boy Scouts use when they give the Morse Code?

Child: They use "dit" for dots (short clicks) and "dah" for dash (long clicks).

Teacher: How would you give the Morse Code for SOS the way the Boy Scouts do?

Child: Dit-dit-dit--dah-dah-dah---dit-dit-dit.

Teacher: What was the next invention that was developed to send messages by electricity?

Child: The telephone.

Teacher: What were the first words which Alexander Graham Bell spoke over the telephone?

Child: "Come here, Watson."

Teacher: Did Alexander Graham Bell speak each letter of each word separately in the way messages are sent by Morse Code?

Child: No, he said the whole word.

Teacher: That's right, when we say words, we connect the sounds together. The telephone can send messages by words just as we speak them.
What other ways do we use today to send messages by electricity?

Child: By radio and television.

Teacher: Yes, we send news and weather reports. Let's imagine that I am going to give a weather report of "Fair and warmer." Listen while I say the weather report in different ways and tell me which way you think best. If I were to make believe I were a telegraph operator, I would say each letter at a time, like this

"f-ai-r-a-n-d-w-ar-m-er"

(Teacher should say each letter separately, with slight pause between each letter).

Now listen when I give the weather report over an old-fashioned telephone.
"fair (pause) and (pause) warmer."

(Teacher should pause between each word deliberately).

Now listen when I give the report over a radio.
"Fair and warmer."

(Teacher should do the entire phrase without pausing between words, but without slurring).

Which one of the ways I gave the forecast made it the easiest to understand?

Child: The last way because you gave the whole report at once.

Teacher: Yes, the weather is both fair and warmer, so I spoke the whole idea without stopping between each word. Most of the time when we talk, we are using groups of words which express an idea. Does anybody know what we call a group of words that expresses a single idea?

Child: A phrase.

Teacher: Yes, and when we speak the words of a phrase, we connect the words together. When we talk, we don't have to separate the words into letters as the telegraph does. But we do pause between phrases when we talk. Would you understand what I meant if I gave a weather forecast which said, "Today will be fair and warmer and cloudy tomorrow."?

Child: No, because you told about two days in the same phrase.

Teacher: What should I have said?

Child: "Today will be fair and warmer" (pause).
"Tomorrow will be cloudy."

Teacher: That's right. Let's find out how well you can listen for phrases that tell the ideas in a poem. In our study of how electricity sends messages we learned that Cyrus Field laid the Atlantic Cable. There is a poem called, "How Cyrus Laid the Cable." Here is a copy of the poem without any punctuation marks. As I read it to you, listen for the pauses I use and put in punctuation marks where you think they belong.

(Hand out dittoed or mimeographed copies to each child with all punctuation marks omitted. Then read the poem aloud with particular attention to proper pauses for phrasing, plus attention to connecting all words within each phrase together for a smooth oral reading. In the copy of the poem reproduced here the punctuation is included. Also vertical lines (|) are used to suggest phrasal pauses which the teacher might use. Avoid pausing at the end of a line unless a pause is suggested).

How Cyrus Laid the Cable

by

John Godfrey Saxe

Come,| listen all unto my song; |
It is no silly fable. |
'Tis all about the mighty cord
They call the Atlantic Cable. |

Bold Cyrus Field he said, said he, |
"I have a pretty notion
That I can run a telegraph
Across the Atlantic Ocean." |

Then all the people laughed and said
They'd like to see him do it; |
He might get half-sea over, | but
He never could go through it.

To carry out his foolish plan
He never would be able; |
He might as well go hang himself
With his Atlantic Cable. |

But Cyrus was a valiant man, |
A fellow of decision, |
And heeded not their mocking words,
Their laughter and derision. |

Twice did his bravest efforts fail, |
And yet his mind was stable; |
He wasn't the man to break his heart
Because he broke his cable. |

"Once more, my gallant boys!", he cried, |
"Three times! you know the fable. |
I'll make it thirty," muttered he, |
"But I will lay the cable!" |

Once more they tried, hurrah! hurrah! |
What means this great commotion? |
The Lord be praised! | The cable's laid
Across the Atlantic Ocean! |

Loud ring the bells, for flashing through
Six hundred leagues of water, |
Old Mother England's benison
Salutes her eldest daughter! |

O'er all the land the tidings speed, |
And soon in every nation, |
They'll hear about the cable with
Profoundest admiration! |

Now, long live President and Queen; |
And long live gallant Cyrus; |
And may his courage, faith, and zeal
With emulation fire us. |

And may we honor evermore
The manly, bold, and stable; |
And tell our sons, | to make them brave, |
How Cyrus laid the cable!

Teacher: Now let's discuss what punctuation you use and why. (Discuss punctuation verse by verse. Not all of the possible class discussion is suggested here. Only a few questions related to phrasing and punctuation are suggested).

Teacher: Did you put a punctuation mark at the end of every line of the first verse?

Child: Not at the end of the third line.

Teacher: Why?

Child: Because the last two lines are all about the same thing. They make only one phrase.

Teacher: Did anyone put a comma within any line of the first verse?

Child: Yes, after "Come" in the first line.

Teacher: Why?

Child: To separate the two phrases.

Teacher: How did you know you should put a comma after "Come"?

Child: Because you paused when you read it.

(Continue similar discussion of other verses up to next to the last verse).

Teacher: In the next to the last verse, did you put commas at the end of every line?

Child: Not at the end of the third line.

Teacher: Did anyone put any commas within the third line?

Child: Yes, after "courage" and "faith".

Teacher: How did you know there should be commas after those words? I don't think I paused after them.

Child: You didn't, but you have to put commas after words in a series.

Teacher: That's right, sometimes we have to use punctuation marks in writing even though we do not pause in speaking. Turn your sheets over for a few minutes and let's find out what you learned about Cyrus Field.

(Ask questions for listening comprehension to be sure the class understands the poem).

Now let's all read the poem aloud together and remember to pause at the right places and speak smoothly by connecting the words within phrases. Let's divide the class into two groups, with each group reading every other verse. Then the other group of the class can listen to see if the pauses are used properly and if the reading is smooth.

(If choral reading has been done in the class previously, the teacher may wish to let the class develop a more varied choral arrangement including solo voices for Cyrus' conversation. The choral reading of each verse should be evaluated before proceeding to the next verse).

Evaluation:

Speaking and Listening:

Teacher: What did we learn about listening and speaking today that we should do whenever we listen or speak?

Children:
1. We learned to listen for ideas.
2. We learned to listen for phrasal pauses that helped us to hear each idea.
3. We learned to speak clearly by pausing between phrases.
4. We learned to speak smoothly by connecting the words in each phrase.

Punctuation:

Teacher: What did we learn about pauses and punctuation?

Children: 1. We learned that we pause most of the time when we see a punctuation mark.

(There are many other aspects of punctuation which a teacher may wish to discuss at this point).

Follow up:

The teacher might ask children to select a man who made a contribution to the use of electricity to send messages, then find something about him in a biography to read aloud to the class. The names of Samuel Morse, Joseph Henry, Cyrus Field, Alexander Graham Bell, Hertz, and Marconi are mentioned in the science text. Selected children could read aloud short excerpts from biographies. Each reading would be evaluated for its information and the effectiveness of phrasing and smoothness.

Perhaps the best opportunity for developing phrasing and smoothness is during the teaching of reading. Since phrases are taught in reading, the use of phrasal pauses in oral reading can reinforce reading concepts. Also, smoothness can be used to illustrate how groups of words represent complete thought units. Almost any story in basal reading books is useful, although the need for smoothness is more obvious in some stories than in others.

An excellent poem for teaching phrasing and smoothness in the primary grades is "The Merry Go-Round."[1] An excellent poem for the upper grades is Robert Frost's "The Pastures."[2] Because most children tend to pause too often in speaking and oral reading, major emphasis should be placed on the development of smoothness.

SKILL FIVE: DEVELOPING VARIETY OF PITCH

The most important vocal skill for an expressive voice is variety of pitch. Variety of pitch occurs as inflections and pitch shifts. An inflection is a gliding change of pitch during a word, such as is heard in a cheery "Hello." A shift is a quick change of pitch from one word to another. In the phrase "Come here!" the pitch will shift upward between the two words if the word "here" is emphasized.

The melody pattern of combined inflection and shifts for a phrase is called intonation. Each language has a characteristic intonation pattern. In American speech, declarative sentences, such as "I am going home," have a downward intonation, although inflections and shifts will be superimposed on the downward trend. Questions like "Where are you going?", which require a declarative statement in answer, also have a downward intonation. Questions requiring a "yes" or "no" answer, such as "Are you going home?" have a rising intonation pattern. Rising intonations are also used to denote incompleteness or uncertainty.

Introductory lessons for developing variety of pitch should require exaggerated pitch shifts and wide range inflections. Intonation should be taught incidentally through use of appropriate shifts or inflections within a phrase.

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[1] Dorothy Baruch, "The Merry-Go-Round," in May H. Artbuthnot, *Time for Poetry*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1952.

[2] Robert Frost, "The Pasture," in Louis Untermeyer, *Modern American Poetry*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932.

A Lesson in Developing Variety of Pitch

Grade 2

Objectives

Social Studies:

To enrich the unit on "Community Helpers," through listening, oral reading, dramatization and singing.

Speaking and Listening:

Teacher's:
1. To create enjoyment in listening to poetry.
2. To develop ability to listen to pitch changes as clues to meaning.
3. To develop ability to use variety of pitch to convey meaning in speaking.
4. To enjoy reading aloud and dramatizing stories.

Children's:
1. To enjoy listening to poetry.
2. To listen for high and low notes in people's voices.
3. To make our voices go "up" and "down" when we speak.
4. To enjoy speaking expressively.

Materials

James Tippett, "The Elevator," *I Go A Traveling.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1929.

Ilda DiMascia, "Mr. Bing," *Original Stories Integrating Speech with Social Studies.* Unpublished Master of Education Thesis, Boston University, 1955.

Procedure

(First day):

Teacher: We have been learning about different people who are "community helpers." I'm going to read a poem about another community helper. Listen so you can tell me who the helper is and where you think he works.

"The Elevator"*

by

James Tippett

Up and down,
Down and up
The elevator goes.
"Floors, please?"

* Reprinted from James Tippett, *I Go A Traveling*, copyright, 1929, Harper and Brothers, by permission of the publisher.

The boy asks
As the doors close.
"Fifth floor!"
"Tenth floor!"
Stairs won't do.
Too far to walk up,
I think, don't you?

(Teacher should use considerable variety of pitch in reading this poem. Exaggerate *up* and *down*. Use definite rising inflection on "Floors, please?" Use similar exaggeration of pitch variations throughout the entire poem).

Teacher: Who is the community helper in this poem?

Child: An elevator boy.

Teacher: What did the elevator boy say to the people in the elevator?

Child: "Floors, please?" "Fifth floor!" "Tenth floor!"

(If desired use this time to discuss a trip to a department store and a ride in the elevator).

Teacher: Why wouldn't stairs do?

Child: Too far to walk up.

Teacher: How did the elevator go?

Child: Up and down.

Teacher: How do we use our voices when we tell how the elevator goes?

Child: We make our voices go up and down.

Teacher: Let's all tell how the elevator goes and make our voices do what the elevator does.

Teacher and Children: "Up and down
Down and up
The elevator goes."

(Listen to children to be sure they can vary the pitch of their voices. Have some children demonstrate individually).

Teacher: Let's be the elevator boy and call out as he does. Let's use our voices to show what he means. Let's all ask, "Floors, please?"

Children: "Floors, please?"

Teacher: How do we use our voices to show we are asking a question?

Child: We make our voices go up on "please?"

Teacher: Yes, let's ask the question again and make our voices slide up like this: "Floors, please?"

Children: "Floors, please?"

Teacher: Let's call out the floors. What should we do with our voices?

Child: Make them go up on floor because we are asking a question.

(Anybody for this floor? The teacher may have to bring out this idea through discussion).

Teacher: Now let's tell why stairs won't do. How can we use our voices to tell why they won't do.

Child: We can make our voices go up and down.

Teacher: Listen to the last lines of the poem and then repeat them with me.

"Stairs won't do.
Too far to walk up,
I think, don't you?"

(Teacher can suggest pitch changes by using high pitch on "up", "I" and "you" and low pitch on other words).

Teacher and Children: (Repeat poem together).

Evaluation:

Speaking and Listening:

Teacher: What did we learn about listening and speaking today?

Children:

1. We learned to listen to the "ups and downs" of people's voices.
2. We learned that these "ups and downs" help us to understand what people mean.
3. We learned to make our voices go "up and down" when we talk.

Social Studies:

(Discuss learning about the elevator boy as a community helper).

Follow-up:

Teacher: Tomorrow I'm going to read you a story about another community helper.

(Second day):

Teacher: Listen to this story about another community helper. Listen to the way I make my voice go "up and down" to tell what is happening and how the people in the story feel.

Mr. Bing

by

*Ilda DiMascia**

It was a snowy morning. Mr. Bing, the mailman, was sound asleep. The cuckoo clock tried to wake him up.

"Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo . . . seven o'clock . . . time to get up!" it went.

But Mr. Bing, the mailman, was still sound asleep. Mrs. Bing came into his bedroom.

"Come, come," she said in a singing voice.

"Time for you to go. Come, so you won't be late!"

"Oh-hummmmm, ohhh-hummm," went Mr. Bing in his deep voice. "I am so sleepy; ohhh-hummm." And he turned over.

"Now, now," said Mrs. Bing, "you know everyone will be waiting for their mail. You must get going."

"You are so right, Mother," said Mr. Bing, still sleepy. "I will have to wake up now."

So up jumped Mr. Bing. He was soon on his way with the mail. Down Main Street he went. Around the corner Mrs. Nolan was waiting for him.

"Good morning, Mr. Bing," she said, cheerfully. "Have you any mail for me? I'm waiting for my magazine."

Mr. Bing looked in his mail bag.

"Yes, Mrs. Nolan," he said, "and here's a letter from your son, too."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," said Mrs. Nolan. "I'm so glad you came."

Mr. Bing went along down Maple Street.

Mr. Moran was waiting for him. "Good morning, Mr. Bing," he said. "Any mail for me? I'm waiting for my newspaper."

Mr. Bing looked in his mail bag. "Yes, Mr. Moran," he said, "here is your newspaper."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," said Mr. Moran. "I'm so glad you came."

On Downing Street his tiny friends came skipping to meet him. There was Tom, Mary, Donna, Dan and Jimmy.

"We have a song, we have a song for you," they said. "May we sing our song for you?"

"Please do," said Mr. Bing.

This is the song they sang: (Tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb).

"Mailman comes on every morning,
Every morning, every morning.
Mailman comes on every morning,
We are all waiting.

Mailman walks a long, long time,
Long, long time: long, long, time,
Mailman walks a long, long time,
Through the rain or shine.

*By permission of the author.

Mailman sings a little song,
Little song, little song,
Mailman sings a little song,
As he swings along.

Mailman brings us many things,
Many things, many things,
Mailman brings us many things,
For a valentine.

Mailman stops a short, short time:
Short, short time: short, short time:
Mailman stops a short, short time:
He must go along."

"Thank you, thank you," said Mr. Bing as he went along.

Mrs. Bing was glad to see him. "Did you have a nice day?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, Mother. It was a very nice day. I helped to make so many people happy. And the children sang a nice song for me."

After dinner Mr. Bing sat down. He read his newspaper. He listened to the radio. He looked at television. Soon the cuckoo began to say something.

"Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo . . . time for bed . . . tomorrow will soon be here . . . go to bed."

"Oh . . . humm . . . I'm so sleepy! . . . "Good night, Dear," he called. "Please call me on time tomorrow. I will have so much mail to make people happy," he yawned.

(After reading the story, discuss the postman as a community helper. Discuss the people he helped in the story. Discuss the way people talked, i.e., Mr. Bing's deep voice, Mrs. Bing's singing voice, the cuckoo's voice, and the children singing the song. Discuss similarities and differences of "ups and downs" in speaking and singing).

Teacher: Tomorrow, I'll give each of you a copy of the story so we can read it and act it out. You can take turns playing the parts of people in the story.

(Third day):

(Hand out dittoed copies of story. Use a primer typewriter or manuscript printing so that children can read material easily. While the vocabulary of this story has been controlled at the second grade level, there may be a few new words which will have to be taught before the children can read the story fluently. Discuss the story and then dramatize it, with individual children reading the dialogue of the people in the story. The entire class, or groups within the class can sing the song and take the part of the cuckoo. As individual children or groups read parts of the story, discuss the variety of pitch to be used and have class members help each other to use the best variety of pitch. The story can be dramatized with appropriate actions, movements, and properties, such as a mail bag, letters, newspapers, etc.).

Any story or poem which contains the words "up" and "down" is excellent for teaching variety of pitch.[1] A popular poem with children of all ages is the following:

O, the grand old Duke of York
He had fifty thousand men;
He marched them up the hill,
Then marched them down again.
When they were up, they were up!
And when they were down, they were down.
But when they were half way up,
They were neither up nor down.

This poem will be more effective if the children stand up whenever they say "up", and sit down whenever they say "down".

Children in the primary grades enjoy using variety of pitch while dramatizing "The Three Bears" and the "Three Little Pigs."

The study of high and low notes on the musical scale may also be used to introduce variety of pitch for speaking. Stories of adventure and excitement usually include dialogue and descriptive passages which require considerable variety of pitch for oral interpretation.[2] Another type of material is the poem with a surprise or unexpected ending.[3]

After teaching variety of pitch as a means of vocal expression, teachers should review the use of variety of volume and variety of duration of words. Follow-up lessons and speaking experiences should emphasize that all these skills, plus phrasing and smoothness, are usually combined for the best possible expressive voice.

Helping Children with Voice Disorders

In the average classroom, approximately 16 per cent of the children will have mild voice difficulties, and about five per cent will have severe voice disorders. Teachers can help these children by adapting classroom procedures to meet individual needs and by securing supplementary assistance from other school and community resources.

Voice disorders may indicate the need for medical or psychological assistance. Organic causes of voice disorders include cleft palate, hearing loss, infections of the respiratory system, tumors of the vocal cords, and cerebral palsy. Voice disorders may also be caused by emotional problems. The first step in helping children with voice disorders is to determine the need for medical or psychological assistance. If there is a speech therapist in the school system, she can test the child to determine the need for further diag-

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[1] Alice Landon, "Space Pilot." The *Grade Teacher*, May, 1954.
Robert L. Stevenson. "The Swing." *A Child's Garden of Verses.*

[2] Howard Pyle. *Robin Hood*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933.
W. S. Gray, A. S. Artley and M. H. Arbuthnot. "Radio Rescue" *Times and Places.* Chicago: Scott, Forsman and Co., 1942.

[3] Franklin P. Adams. "The Poor Man." (Available in anthologies of American poetry).
Arthur Guiterman. "Wishing Bone." (Available in anthologies of American poetry).

nosis and for speech therapy. The school nurse can assist the teacher if there are physical problems. The guidance counselor or psychologist can assist if there are any emotional problems. When organic factors exist, the child should be sent to an ear, nose and throat specialist for complete examination and medical treatment. When emotional factors exist, the guidance counselor or school psychologist can determine the need for further testing or psycho-therapy in a guidance center. The co-operation of the parents in any such program is essential. Because severe voice disorders may have many causes and treatments, the parents will need continual support and encouragement so they will secure the appropriate medical or psychological services. Once the possible causes of a voice disorder have been determined, the teacher can adapt the speaking activities of the classroom under the guidance of the speech therapist, medical specialist or psychologist. Children with mild difficulties need not be referred to other school and community resources. However, children whose voices do not improve after a reasonable period of classroom instruction should be referred to the speech therapist or nearest university or hospital speech and hearing center.

Classroom instruction in the vocal skills may be modified to help children with specific voice problems. The types of voice problems, and the specific vocal skills which can be used for these problems, are described in the following section. If more than one vocal skill is recommended for a specific disorder, emphasize only one vocal skill at a time. All possible causes of each type of disorder are not listed. It is assumed that teachers will investigate all medical and psychological factors which may be present. When emotional factors do exist, it may not be desirable to provide instruction in the vocal skills.

Disorders of Pitch

Pitch level too high: Explore possible causes of hypertension. Give additional work in *vocal ease* and prolonged *duration of words.*

Pitch level too low: Not very common in the elementary schools. Classroom activities should stress *variety of pitch.*

Monotony or inflexibility of pitch: A mild problem that exists in large proportion of children. Exaggerate *variety of pitch.*

Too much flexibility: In the absence of emotional factors, teach child to use *variety of duration of words* as the major means of expression.

Foreign intonation: Give considerable instruction in *variety of pitch* with emphasis on inflections and shifts for individual words, especially the last words of a phrase.

Rising intonation: May indicate insecurity. In teaching *variety of pitch,* emphasize use of falling inflection on last words of a phrase.

Disorders of Volume

Volume too soft: May be associated with personality difficulties such as insecurity, withdrawal. May be caused by a hearing loss. For vocal skill, give practice with stories, poems and characterizations requiring *loud volume,* but in a pleasing voice quality.

Volume too loud: May be the result of a hearing loss. May be associated with aggressive behavior. For vocal skill, give practice with selections requiring use of *soft volume* and *vocal ease*.

Disorders of Phrasing and Duration

Improper phrasing: Failure to pause between all phrases, pausing in the middle of phrases, or word by word oral reading. Provide practice with *phrasing and smoothness*.

Fast rate: Explore possible emotional factors. Speaking activities should require *prolonged duration of words* and *smoothness*.

Slow rate: Not a very common voice problem. If it is a problem of voice usage only (not intelligence or personality) provide practice with materials requiring *short duration of words* and *smoothness*.

Staccato rate: Choppy rate, with short duration of words and slight pauses between words. Emphasize *prolonged duration of words* and *smoothness*.

Disorders of Voice Quality

Breathiness: A "whispery" voice, usually soft in volume. A very common mild problem, especially in girls. Explore possible emotional factors. For vocal skill, begin with *vocal ease* and then work for *loud volume* combined with *vocal ease*.

Raspiness: A "gutteral, throaty" voice, not very common in the elementary schools. Frequently, pitch level is too low. If not organic or emotional, begin with *vocal ease*. Then experiment with *variety of pitch*, *louder* or *softer volume*, *prolonged duration of words*, and *smoothness*. Any one or combination of these skills may bring about improvement.

Hoarseness: Voice sounds as if child has a cold, or laryngitis. The cause may be organic or emotional. If hoarseness persists for more than two weeks, examination by a throat specialist is essential. Emotional factors should also be investigated if a throat examination reveals nodes or polyps on the vocal cords. These nodes may be caused from misuse of the vocal cords due to emotional tensions. If no organic or emotional causes are found, classroom work should begin with *vocal ease* followed by experimentation with all other vocal skills to determine which skill or combination of skills bring about most improvement.

Harshness: Excessive throat tension may make a voice sound "hard", although it does not seem raspy or hoarse. Mild harshness is common. If there are no emotional factors, classroom instruction should emphasize *vocal ease*.

Strident Voice: A "shrill," "tinny," "metallic," "thin" voice. Pitch level is usually too high. If not emotional, emphasize *vocal ease*, *prolonged duration of words*, and *increased volume* at *lower pitch levels*.

Muffled Voice: A "dull," excessively relaxed tone. Not common in children. Training in voice should stress *variety of pitch* combined with work on more precise articulation of all vocal and consonant sounds.